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(b) whether it is a fact that one of the Commissioners, Mr. Surya Rao, is a relative of the Chief Minister, the hon. the Raja of Panagal, and the other Mr. Chengayya his legal adviser ;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Mr. Chidambaram Pillai, another Commissioner, is related to the hon. Mr. Sivagnanam Pillai, the Minister for Development, and the fourth Mr. P. V. Nataraja Mudaliyar belongs to the Ministerialist party ;

(d) the principle on which these appointments were made and whether they were made on territorial basis ; and

(e) if the latter, whether there is any one to represent the West Coast in the Board ?

A.—(a) The present Commissioners possess the qualification prescribed by sub-section (1) of section 8 of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 1923. They were practising vakils before they were appointed as Commissioners.

(b) Mr. Surya Rao is not directly related to the Chief Minister, the hon. the Raja of Panagal. Mr. Chengayya was not his legal adviser. He has appeared in some cases for him and in others against him.

(c) Mr. Chidambaram Pillai is not related to the Minister for Development. Mr. Nataraja Mudaliyar belongs to the Ministerial party.

(d) The appointments were made on the recommendations of a Committee specially appointed for the purpose. They were not made on a territorial basis.

Rao Sahib U. RAMA RAO :—“ With reference to answer to (d), may I know whether it was not a fact that the committee's decisions were frequently interfered with by instructions from the Minister ? ”

The hon. the RAJA OF PANAGAL :—“ No, Sir.”

Appointment of a representative of the West Coast to the Religious Endowments Board.

* 46 Q.—Rao Sahib U. RAMA RAO : Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(a) whether it is a fact that the districts of Malabar and South Kanara have been exempted from the operation of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act ;

(b) if not, whether the hon. the Chief Minister will be pleased to exempt the Mutts in South Kanara at least, from the purview of this Act, as already promised ;

(c) even if this is not feasible, whether the hon. the Chief Minister will consider the advisability of appointing one representative in the Board from the West Coast, preferably a Madhwa Brahman, to safeguard the interests of temples and Mutts in that part of the Presidency, which forms the stronghold of the Madhwa community ?

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- A.—(a) The answer is in the negative.
 (b) The question will be considered if and when any math moves in the matter and satisfies Government that there are sufficient grounds for excluding it from the scope of the Act.
 (c) The question will be considered when a vacancy arises.

MR. K. PRABHAKARAN TAMPAN :—“ With reference to (c), may I ask the Minister whether Government have appointed honorary assistant commissioners to assist the Board in Malabar ? ”

The hon. the RAJA OF PANAGAL :—“ Sir, I should like to have notice of the question.”

Village Panchayats.

Village panchayats in the Presidency.

* 47 Q.—MR. J. A. SALDANHA : Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to refer to the answer to question No. 193 at the last sitting and state—
 12-15 p.m.

(a) the reasons for the marked variations in the number of village panchayats in the several districts from 1 in Malabar, 4 in South Kanara, and Guntur, 2 in Cuddapah, to 10 in Nellore, 34 in South Arcot, 80 in Anantapur and 140 in North Arcot;

(b) whether the Government have laid down instructions with a view to Collectors and other officers concerned encouraging the formation of village panchayats;

(c) what steps Government have taken or contemplate with a view to ensuring a more or less uniform rate of progress in the growth of village panchayat system; and

(d) how many of the village panchayats have been entrusted with the work of looking after forests and which of them?

A.—(a) The variations are in general due to the varying degrees of enthusiasm or apathy displayed by presidents of taluk boards, the honorary organizers and the ryots. The large number in the Anantapur district is due to the specially hard work done by the President, Anantapur Taluk Board, and that in North Arcot to the intensive campaign carried out in the Polur taluk by a band of honorary organizers under the direction of a Chief Honorary Organizer.

(b) The answer is in the negative.

(c) The Government would leave the question to the Registrar-General of Panchayats, his personal assistant and his band of honorary organizers. The main duty of the Registrar-General is to organize and supervise panchayats.

(d) Only one—the Karkal village panchayat in the South Kanara district.

MR. J. A. SALDANHA :—“ May I know whether the Registrar-General of Panchayats is taking sufficient interest in the matter ? ”

The hon. the RAJA OF PANAGAL :—“ The only answer I can give is that he has done his level best.”